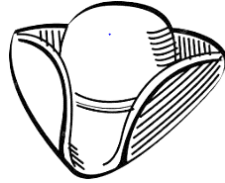


THE FRANCESTOWN HERITAGE MUSEUM

Newsletter

Vol. 8, No. 9



September 2022

HATTERY - II

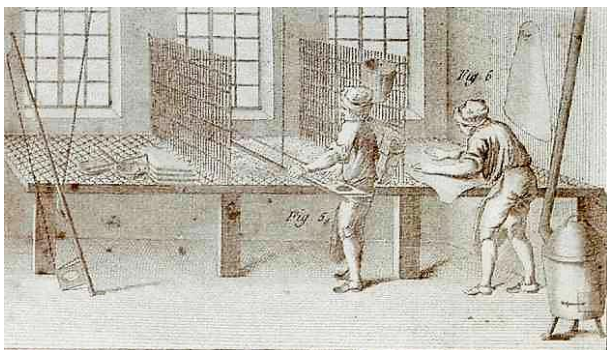
THE HATTER - CONTINUED FROM AUGUST 2022

In the August issue we left our hatter and his assistant in a cloud of mercury-laden steam setting them on a course to become the next “mad hatters”. But on a more upbeat note, they were ready to start the actual making of your beaver skin hat in time for you to wear it in the Labor Day Parade.

STAGE #2: PREPARING THE FELT

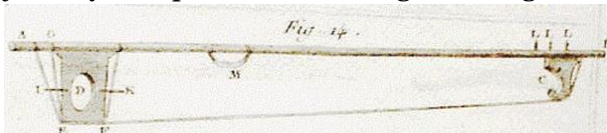
Step #1 BOWING

Taking the fluff prepared in step #1 you must first agitate it to release dirt and tangles and cause the fibers to mat together. This is done on a specially designed table that has holes or slots cut into the surface so the dirt can fall to the floor.



AGITATING TABLE

A special device called a “Hatter’s Bow” (which somewhat resembled a large violin bow) was passed over the top of the fluff while the journeyman plucked the string. This agitated



A HATTERS BOW

CONTINUED ON PAGE # 3

THE VIS-À-VIS - A FAMILY AFFAIR

The 2021 June, July and August editions of this newsletter provided details on our arranging for the return of the Winslow Family Hob ‘n Nob Farm Vis-à-Vis to the Heritage Museum.



Well, the return was arranged and the Heritage Museum is where it now resides. It has been many years since the Winslow family lived in town and operated the famed farm. Following a disastrous fire, the farm operation wound down and events resulted in the carriage belonging to Jane Evans Hamilton in Charleston, SC (formerly of Greenfield Rd. cor King Hill Rd.).

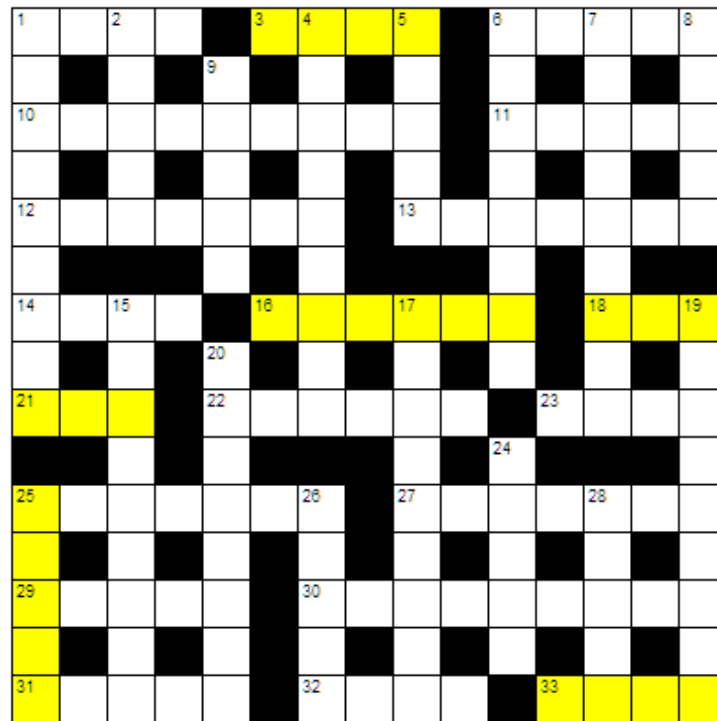
In August a phone call was received from a guest staying at an inn in the Lake Sunapee region. The caller was Stacie Meislohn who is the niece of Alice Winslow of the Hob ‘n Nob farm. Stacie and her husband Pete were here doing some research on the family and learned that her aunt’s beloved vis-à-vis was in the museum and had been fully restored.

CONTINUED ON PAGE # 3

(2)

SEPTEMBER THEME CROSSWORD

The **yellow** blocks contain the theme words and all come from the text of this newsletter. Enjoy!



Across

- 1 |___ review
- 3 ICONIC ONE IN FRANCESTOWN
- 6 Beginning
- 10 Characteristic of a former time
- 11 T place
- 12 Thin and slippery
- 13 Absence of hope
- 14 Honoree's spot
- 16 A CERTAIN GENERATION
- 18 ONCE MADE FROM BEAVER
- 21 HATTER WHO USED MERCURY
- 22 Large, deep pit
- 23 Beat badly
- 25 A thousand million Expressing jollity
- 27 Expressing jollity
- 29 Ann ____, MI
- 30 Skill relating to the woods
- 31 Reside

32 "The Open Window" writer

33 FOUND IN A HATTERY

Down

- 1 Netherlands city
- 2 Like the flu
- 4 Eurasian parsley
- 5 Exposed
- 6 Suitable
- 7 Sweet flavored nut
- 8 Gibson, e.g.
- 9 Beau
- 15 Permanent
- 17 Artificial bank of soil
- 19 Quid pro quo
- 20 _____ away (Save)
- 24 Switch material
- 25 USED TO MARK PROPERTY
- 26 Red-spotted creatures

THE HATTER –

the fibers in the fluff and caused them to mat together. The resulting mat was called a “batt”. This process was done until they had produced two large and two small batts which were then used to make the hat.

Step #2: BASONING

This step just ensures that the shrinking of the batt would continue and you could begin to shape the fabric. The process entails taking the batts produced in Step #1 and covering them with damp cloth. These alternating layers of batt, damp cloth, batt, etc. were then placed over a small heat source and the shaping of the fabric would begin to occur.

Step #3: PLANKING

Yet more shrinking takes place in this step but it also causes the shrunken bats to felt. In large hat manufacturing operations, the people doing this work are called fouleurs. A mixture of wine waste sediment and hot water is placed in a metal basin and heated. The fouleurs then agitate the shrunken bats by hand and with stirring planks causing them to shrink and felt.

A short digression may be in order here; what is felt? Felt is a fabric resulting when the tiny fibers of what you are working with (beaver, rabbit, wool, etc.) are pressed and tangled together in a process involving heat, moisture and friction. The exact conditions created by planking.

Once this is completed it is on to Step #4.

Step #4: DRYING and BLOCKING

The planking complete, the felts are then stretched over wooden molds to be shaped and allowed to dry.

STAGE #3: FINISHING

Up to this stage, the work was generally done by the hatter’s journeyman. The finishing and detailing were generally done by women.

THE VIS-À-VIS

Arrangements were made for them to visit the museum and get photos and history of the carriage as well as other Hob n’ Farm artifacts in our agricultural exhibit.



STACIE and PETE along with two really cute Dachshunds (one short and one long hair).

In a sign of family loyalty one of the Dachshunds is named Sydney, you’ve got it, after Sydney Winslow. We hope to be able to provide more information on the Winslows and Hob and Nob in future Museum Newsletters.

SEPTEMBER PUZZLE SOLUTION

1	R	A	2	V	E	3	B	4	A	5	R	6	N	6	A	7	P	8	H	8	A
	O		I		S		S		A		P		I		C						
10	T	H	R	O	W	B	A	C	K		11	P	O	S	I	T					
	T		A		A		F		E		O		T		O						
12	E	E	L	L	I	K	E			13	D	E	S	P	A	I	R				
	R						N		T						I		C				
14	D	A	15	I	S		16	S	I	17	L	E	N	T		18	H	A	19	T	
	A		N			20	S		D		A		E		I		I				
21	M	A	D			22	Q	U	A	R	R	Y			23	R	O	U	T		
			E				U						T		24	B					
25	B	I	L	L	I	O	N			27	H	E	I	G	H	H	O				
	R		I		R					E	W		R		E		R				
28	A	R	B	O	R			30	W	O	O	D	C	R	A	F	T				
	N		L		E					T		R		H		V		A			
31	D		W		E	L	L			32	S	A	K	I		33	F	E	L	T	

TRADITIONAL CRAFTS DEMONSTRATIONS IN FRANCESTOWN



Do you know what this is?

How about this?



COME TO THE TOWN COMMON SATURDAY
SEPTEMBER 3RD BETWEEN 10 AM AND 2 PM
TO LEARN WHAT THESE ARE AND HOW THEY
ARE USED. 9 DIFFERENT CRAFTS WILL BE
DEMONSTRATED.



Laura Abramson
Carding fleece



Tina Daniels
Hand spinning



Nancy Gagnon
Needlework



Janet Hicks
Quilting



Scott Jenkins
Woodturning



Karen Steuer
Soap Making



Pat Talhauser
& Elly Miles
Natural Dyes



Eileen Koch
Rug Hooking



Lorraine Walker
Pine Needle
Basketry

CONTINUED FROM PAGE # 3

THE HATTER –**Step #1 TRIMMING and DYING**

At this stage the body of the hat is heated over a fire and rubbed with a pumice stone which produces a nice outer finish. They would then trim the brim to prepare the hat for dying.

Step #2 WATERPROOFING and STIFFENING

After dying they would apply a stiffening agent with steam. This helped to create the final shape of the hat.

In order to head off a lot of e-mails asking, “what about the dying”, I skipped detailing that as this article is getting far too long – my apologies.

Step #3 TRIMMING

The trimming in this step refers to the general finishing with details such as installing a lining, hat band and other finishing touches.

You may now stop by your local hattery and pick up that new hat of yours – just in time for the Labor Day Parade. Ω

**FRANCESTOWN HERITAGE MUSEUM
NEWSLETTER**

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For any of the following contact Bill McAuley at: wfm03043@comcast.net

Distribution – if you would like to be added to the distribution list and receive a copy monthly, or:

Letter to the Editor – If you would like to write a letter to the editor – they are always welcome and may appear in later issues (with permission of the writer), or:

Receive a Past Issue - they will be sent upon request. An index of past issues is also available. Ω

HI TECH IN OUR ANCESTORS' DAYS –

Over the years we have included many articles in this Newsletter detailing just how laborious most tasks were for our ancestors. Anything that made life easier was valued and this went for their various tools also. Not only useful, but tools were also expensive and the loss of one could be a real hardship.

It was also common in the “good olde days” for neighbors to help out one another – e.g., the traditional New England Barn Raising”. Neighbors would come to help with the day’s labors and brought their own tools with them. It is easy to imagine how at the end of a hard day’s work and the obligatory passing round of the bottle of rum, that tools could end up going home with the wrong person.

So what steps were taken to safeguard the tools? Take the lowly shovel for instance. It was common practice for folks to initial their tools to identify them. Such was the case with this shovel that had the owner’s initials burned into the wooden handle.



The FAP is clearly visible in this shovel as well as other tools belonging to this farm. Which begs the question, how did they get such well lettered initials in/on the tools. Well you should ask and the answer is, a branding iron.



CONTINUED ON PAGE # 6

CONTINUED FROM PAGE # 5

HI TECH

This would not be the branding iron used to mark cattle. Rather a much smaller item with carefully made raised letters for the owner's name or initials. Like a cattle branding iron this would be heated until glowing red and then pushed against the piece at the spot you wanted the "brand" to appear. A much more permanent marking method than paint which could wear off.



The shovel above as well as the branding iron were donated to the museum by the Carey family. Mary Francis Carey is a descendant of the Pettee family who for generations have owned Elm Farm in Frankestown. Many folks are familiar with the iconic barn that sits alongside the road at that farm today.



The barn has been widely featured in magazines and figures prominently in a book "Preserving Old Barns" by John Porter. It is often referred to as the barn for all seasons as the Careys hang a decoration on the door appropriate for the time of year. Ω

THE SILENT GENERATION:

Back in the June Issue of the Newsletter we had a short article on the names of the different generations and the characteristics associated with that generation. A reader had sent us a list of those characteristics attributed to the Silent Generation (those of us born in the 30s and 40s). We exist as a very special generation and here is why . . .

- ❖ We are the smallest number of children in one generation since the 1900s. *We are the last ones in many ways.*
- ❖ We are the last generation climbing out of the depression, who can remember the winds of war and the impact of a world at war which rattled the structure of our daily lives for years.
- ❖ We are the last to remember ration books for everything from gas to sugar to shoes to stoves.
- ❖ We saved tin foil and poured fat into cans.
- ❖ We saw cars up on blocks because tires were not available.
- ❖ We can remember milk being delivered to our house early in the morning and placed in the milk box on the porch.
- ❖ We are the last to see the gold stars in the windows of our grieving neighbors whose sons died in WWII.
- ❖ We saw the boys, home from the war, build their little houses.
- ❖ We are the last generation who spent our childhood without television; instead, we imagined what we heard on the radio.
- ❖ With no TV, cell phones or computers, we spent our childhood "playing outside" and we were able to do this on our own as there was no city playground

CONTINUED ON PAGE # 7

or little league for kids.

- ❖ The lack of television in our early years meant for most of us, that we had little real understanding of what the world was like.
- ❖ On Saturday afternoons, the movies gave us newsreels of the war sandwiched in between westerns and cartoons.
- ❖ Telephones were one to a house, often shared (party lines) and hung on the wall.
- ❖ Computers were called calculators, they only added and were hand cranked. Typewriters were driven by pounding fingers, throwing the carriage and changing the ribbons.
- ❖ The Internet and Google were words that did not exist.
- ❖ Newspapers and magazines were written for adults and the news was broadcast on our table radio in the evening by Gabriel Heatter.
- ❖ We were the last group who had to find out for ourselves.
- ❖ As we grew up the country was exploding with growth.
- ❖ The G.I. Bill gave the returning veterans the means to get an education and spurred colleges to grow.
- ❖ VA loans fanned a housing boom.
- ❖ Pent up demand coupled with new installment payment plans put factories to work.
- ❖ New highways brought jobs and mobility.
- ❖ The radio network expanded from three stations to thousands of stations.
- ❖ Our parents were suddenly free from the confines of the depression and war, and they threw themselves into exploring opportunities they had never imagined.

- ❖ We were not neglected, but we weren't today's all-consuming family focus.
- ❖ We played by ourselves until the streetlights came on.
- ❖ We entered a world of overflowing plenty and opportunity, a world where we were welcomed.
- ❖ We enjoyed a luxury; we felt secure in our futures.
- ❖ Polio was still acrippler.
- ❖ The Korean War was a dark presage in the early 50s and by mid-decade school children were ducking under desks for Air-Raid training.
- ❖ Russia built the Iron Curtain and China became Red China.
- ❖ Eisenhower sent the first "advisors" to Vietnam.
- ❖ Castro set up camp in Cuba and Khrushchev came to power.
- ❖ We were the last generation to enjoy an interlude when there were no threats to our homeland.
- ❖ We came of age in the 40s and 50s. The War was over and the cold war, terrorism, global warming and perpetual economic insecurity had yet to haunt daily lives.
- ❖ Only our generation can remember both a time of Great War and a time when our world was secure and full of bright promise and plenty.
- ❖ We grew up at the best time, a time when the world was getting better – not worse.
- ❖ We are the Silent Generation.
- ❖ We are the last ones.

More than 99% of us are either retired or deceased, and we feel privileged to have . . .

"Lived in the Best of Times" Ω

To those members of other generations, send us a list of what best characterizes your generation.

CRAFTING DEMONSTRATION

SEPTEMBER 3rd

Traditional crafts will be demonstrated on Saturday, September 3rd on the Town Common in Francestown from 10 am to 2 pm as part of the town's 250th birthday celebration. Come and visit with talented crafters who will take you back into history to see how many familiar items were made "back then".

Woodworkers will demonstrate wood turning and wood carving. You can also stop in the Heritage Museum and see the "Cooper's Exhibit" which shows the steps and tools needed to complete a cask or barrel from start to finish.

You can see how fiber becomes yarn for embroidery, knitting and weaving through carding the fleece, spinning it into yarn, and adding color through the natural dye process. Floor covers and quilts, candles and soaps are other familiar household items which will be made or exhibited by the crafters.



Laura Abramson
Carding fleece



Tina Daniels
Hand spinning



Nancy Gagnon
Needlework



Janet Hicks
Quilting



Scott Jenkins
Woodturning



Karen Steuer
Soap Making



Brie Sullivan
Candle Making



Pat Talhauser
& Elly Miles
Natural Dyes



Eileen Koch
Rug Hooking



Lorraine Walker
Pine Needle
Basketry